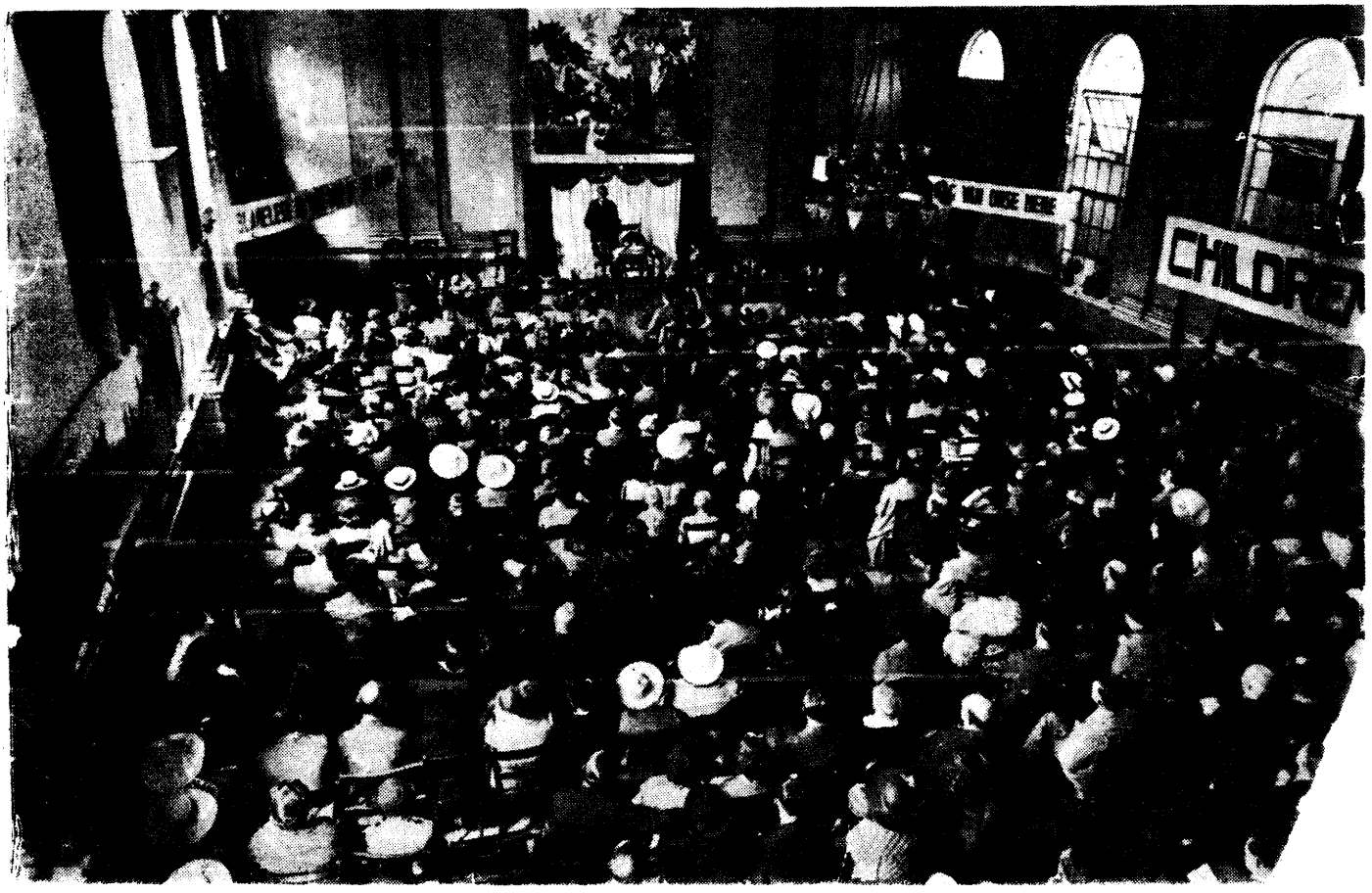
Report of the Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly

JOHANNESBURG, April 3 to 6, 1942



REPORT OF THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ASSEMBLY

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ANNUALLY Jehovah's witnesses in various parts of the earth assemble together to praise and worship their God, JEHOVAH, the MOST HIGH. Herein is published a full report of the proceedings of the 1942 ASSEMBLY FOR WORSHIP of Jehovah's witnesses held at Johannesburg, South Africa, from April 3 to 6, 1942. This assembly was organised and conducted as an extension of the THEOCRATIC ASSEMBLY of Jehovah's witnesses held at St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A., some months earlier.

All Christians worship JEHOVAH GOD in spirit and in truth. All such love Jehovah and Christ his King and love those who truly worship Jehovah and the King. It is a joy to such and a source of great spiritual strength to assemble together to worship the Lord, and it is certain that such is pleasing to the Most High.

All of the Lord's people today appreciate the words of the sweet singer at Psalm 148:12, 13: "Both young men and maidens; old men and children: Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven." The assembly of the young men, the maidens, the old men, and the children was a joy to all those associated in the Theocratic Government; and when assembled together in one place, all have great joy in singing the praises to the name of the MOST HIGH.

One hundred and fifteen thousand Jehovah's witnesses attended the St. Louis THEOCRATIC ASSEMBLY. Twelve thousand were present at the Leicester convention and approximately two thousand at Johannesburg. These assemblies have demonstrated the marvellous unity that exists between the brethren of all nationalities in their devotion to the Lord and their unfailing hope in the THEOCRACY, the Kingdom of God under Christ.

THEOCRATIC ASSEMBLY at ST. LOUIS, Mo., U.S.A.

UNIVERSAL DOMINATION as the great issue before all creation was powerfully brought to the fore at the opening address of the president of the WATCH TOWER SOCIETY to the Theocratic Assembly in St. Louis, Mo., August 6-10, 1941. Referring briefly to the prophetic drama in the Bible concerning patient Job and the severe test of his integrity toward God, the speaker said:

"The issue between Satan and Jehovah was not raised for the first time in Job's day, but centuries before that time. The prophetic drama of Job discloses what Jehovah requires of all creatures who shall receive his boundless blessings. While the question for determination raised by the prophetic drama was and is, 'Can Jehovah put men on earth, who under the most severe test, will prove faithful and true to God?' yet that great issue embraces much more. . . . Long before that time Satan had challenged the supremacy of Jehovah and raised the great issue. Many other scriptures support that conclusion. Satan's accusing charge was made before the angels of heaven, and hence was known among the host of heaven, but not properly understandable and appreciated amongst men till the present time. God's due time now appears when those on earth devoted to him are given an understanding of the real issue. The primary issue raised by Satan's defiant challenge was and is that of UNIVERSAL DOMINATION."

To successfully hold the five-day Theocratic Assembly in St. Louis in the face of both contemptuous official indifference and bitter religious opposition of those who would now rule the earth in the place and stead of God's Kingdom by Christ, this in itself was a triumphant answer to Satan's challenge of Jehovah's universal domination. It also proved to be a test of the integrity of Jehovah's covenant people, but which was faithfully met by a multitude, 115,000 strong, to the honour and vindication of Jehovah's name.

The throngs packed out the mammoth bowl of The Arena, which seats 25,000, filled to overflowing the Hall "A" eastward and the Hall "B" westward and the remaining scores of thousands sat out in the grounds and the park listening to the discourses over loudspeakers. Every one heard perfectly.

At the southern end of the huge oval of The Arena was the speakers' platform, large and spacious, with purple and white drapings and with platform railings all overlaid with shimmering gold. It was also bedecked with ferns and pink gladioli. Up above this, and thirteen feet above the Arena floor, was the orchestra pit, with a broad banner in front, having a back-ground of brilliant red, upon which was the 1941 year-text, "Salvation to our God . . . and unto the Lamb.—Rev. 7:10," all in letters of white bordered with glittering spangles of gold.

An orchestra of 126 trained musicians and a chorus of several hundred led this multitude in songs of praise. Brethren from every state in the Union and two thousand Canadian brethren attended the convention; also large numbers from Mexico, Cuba and South America. Field service was engaged in throughout territory of a fifty mile radius of St. Louis. Hundreds of thousands of pieces of Bible literature were placed during this greatest of Christian assemblies. 12,000 were accommodated at the trailer camp on the outskirts of the city. 3,903 presented themselves for water immersion on the Sunday morning. Sunday was "Children's Day." 15,000 children of the consecrated assembled in the front part of The Arena to hear Judge Rutherford's talk "Children of the King."

Report of the Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly

JOHANNESBURG, April 3 to 6, 1942

Johannesburg The Convention City

JOHANNESBURG is sometimes called the most romantic city of the Southern Hemisphere. It is said to be the only South African city with an international reputation. Scarce sixty years old, its history is a tale of blood and sweat, intrigue, strife and high finance, of fortunes won and lost. Its story is the record of man's striving for that which the children of this world prize above all else, the yellow wealth which lies beneath its soil. Metropolis of the greatest gold-bearing region on earth, Johannesburg today is the natural nerve centre of South Africa, of its industry, commerce and communications.

In recent years it has achieved its highest honour. By virtue of its position it has become the recognized assembling place once a year of Jehovah's witnesses and their companions in Southern Africa. Each year in recent times these servants of the Most High God have turned their faces and their hearts towards the city built on gold and there have gathered themselves together in one place in accordance with the Apostle's injunction.—Heb. 10:25.

Motive in Assembling

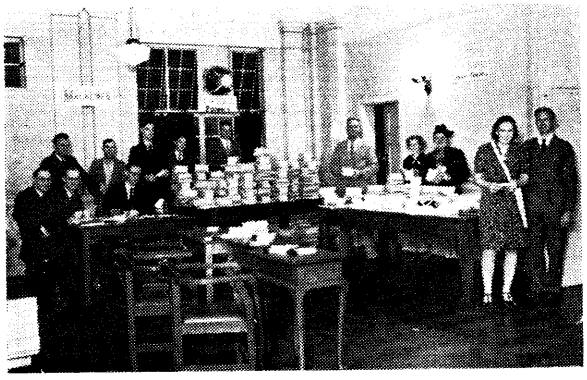
Jehovah's witnesses are not interested in gold. High finance is not for them. They appreciate the marvels of the modern mining industry but they do not come to see its mills and furnaces and winding gear. They came this year, as in the past, to honour the Name of the great Theocrat, Jehovah God, and His King, Christ Jesus. They came to bear witness to the vital truths of and concerning The Theocratic Government soon to be in full sway throughout the earth. They came to receive instruction from the Word of God that thus they might be better equipped to render whole-hearted obedience and devotion to the Higher Powers. It can be said, without fear of contradiction, that there never has been up to the present time any assembly of Christians in this land which radiated more of the spirit and joy of the Lord and more real zeal and enthusiasm for the Kingdom of God than this one. It was an event that will live forever in the minds of many who were present.

Pre-Convention Activity

Some thought that the 1941 assembly would be the last this side of the great convention that will never end. The times were critical. Evidence multiplied daily that powerful forces were at work to crush the tiny band of witnesses in this country. News came from across the sea telling how in many lands freedom of conscience, speech and worship lay bruised and bleeding beneath the iron heel of despotism. Certain overt acts indicated that freedom of worship was going to be restricted in this country too. But it soon became manifest that the Lord's "strange work" was not finished. From far and near came those of goodwill toward God and his King, joining themselves to the chariot of the Greater Jehu. The opposition and interference with age-long rights and privileges only served to quicken interest in the Kingdom message resulting in the greatest increase yet recorded in the South African field.

In November 1941 it seemed clearly to be God's will that His witnesses should assemble again in 1942, during the holiday weekend, April 3-6. From the moment the decision was taken the wheels were set in motion and intensive organising work began. The full story of these preparations will never be told. The Society's branch office at Cape Town was the focal centre of activity but the co-operation of friends throughout the country was involved. Information issued from time to time made it clear that this was going to be the greatest convention ever held in South Africa. Reports seemed to indicate that every man, woman and child throughout the country giving allegiance to the Theocratic Government of Jehovah and His King Christ Jesus was going to do his or her best to be there.

There was some difficulty regarding the selection of suitable halls but these difficulties were overcome and what was regarded as adequate accommodation secured. It was anticipated that 1,200 witnesses would attend the convention. That



A Busy Corner

many came but when 500 persons of goodwill turned up to the public meetings giving a peak attendance of nearly 1,700 on the Sunday morning the available accommodation was taxed to the utmost. Several other conventions were being held in Johannesburg the same weekend and to find accommodation for such a large number for a few days was no easy task. Many visitors made their own arrangements but the European accommodation committee found rooms for 332 persons (and used up 75 gallons of petrol in doing it) and the African committee for approximately the same number. Those serving on these committees worked hard for many weeks ahead of time so that the visitors would have somewhere to lay their heads at night. The fact that we did not require to make "Downie mattresses" at the last moment is a testimony to the good work done by them and also to the goodwill of the people of Johannesburg. An interesting sidelight in this connection is that several householders contacted in the search for accommodation attended the public lecture on "Comfort All That Mourn" and Model Studies are now being held in their homes.

Record Attendance

On the Sunday morning 821 persons were in attendance at the European section of the convention and 846 at the African or a total peak attendance of 1667. Of that number 340 were children between the ages of 5 and 18. The witnesses came from every corner of the land, from city, dorp and farm; from Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and East London in the South; Grahamstown and Queenstown in the Eastern Province; Kimberley and Bloemfontein; Kuruman and the borders of the Kalahari were represented; on the other side, Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Dundee, Newcastle, Piet Retief and Barberton; from Messina and Louis Trichardt in the North; every Reef town sent its quota and from a hundred other places which to most people are no more than names; one came from the furthermost border of Portuguese East Africa, one from the copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia and yet another from distant Nyasaland.

They were drawn from all walks of life. There was the business man, the miner, the artisan and the farmer. Brethren all, they wore one thing in common, happy Kingdom smiles and the confident, purposeful air which in these days of distress and perplexity is peculiar to those whose hearts and minds are stayed on the great Theocrat and His Kingdom and whose faculties are given to its service.

Many travelled to Johannesburg by train; others by car; some by lorry or bus and even the horse and ox wagon were used in the early stages of the journey by a few living in the more remote parts of the country.

Quite a number were attending their first assembly. Some had been singing the praises of the Most High God for but a few short months and some for but a few short weeks. Some there were who had come to a full appreciation of their relationship to their Creator at the previous Theocratic Assembly and who, after their first year of Theocratic service, were doubly determined to continue faithful in that which had been committed to them. In contrast there was present one who had the privilege of being the first to bring the Kingdom message to these shores, a little old Scottish lady from Glasgow, who has grown old in the truth but whose vigorous example of service and continued faith and faithfulness at the mature age of 80 marks her still as a "young man" in the Lord's organisation.

Children Conspicuous

In obedience to organisation instructions those who came brought their children with them. The little ones were everywhere, their happy, eager little faces brightening the crowded scene and their fresh, treble voices adding a joyous chorus to the hum of conversation which rose inevitably between sessions like the humming of a hive. Jehovah's people have much to talk about.

Unity in God's Organisation

Those attending the assembly were an order-loving crowd and no policemen were needed to control them. They obeyed organisation instructions unquestioningly and this contributed largely to the smooth running of the convention. They were neat and clean in appearance. Tobacco smoke did not pollute the atmosphere. All in all they were just such people as one would expect the great Jehovah to choose as his earthly wit-

nesses. It is true there were "not many great, not many rich, not many (worldly) wise" amongst them but one thing was common to them all—their devotion to Jehovah and His Kingdom was complete. It showed in their faces and in their speech, marking them as a people with and for a purpose, separate and apart from a crazy, bewildered, war-torn world. One who is not of them remarked concerning them: "Coming amongst these people is like coming from a muddy pool into clean water". And that, we think, puts it as nicely as it can be put.

Considering the phenomenon of this multitude, drawn from every section of the community, gathered together with one consent in one place with one purpose, one could not help but muse over the puniness of man's endeavour. For 32 years some of the nobler minded politicians of this country have been striving for racial unity. Today the fires of racial intolerance burn as fiercely as ever and religion feeds the flames. But Jehovah's truth breaks down all barriers and unites men, not by ties of blood, but by the fellowship of Christ. And so at the Theocratic Assembly Rooinek and Boer sat down together, brethren in Theocratic service. Not always understanding each other's language perfectly, they yet managed to get along. Many was the conversation carried on with the one speaking English and the other Afrikaans. In the field they united in giving tongue to the "pure language" which the Lord has turned unto his people in these last days.—Zeph. 3:8, 9.

Jehovah's Convention

The convention was a big event in prospect for all lovers of The Theocracy; it is an even bigger event in retrospect. The achievement of success at the convention was the burden of their prayers to the King of Eternity for months ahead. They applied their minds and devoted efforts each to do his share to make it a success. It was manifest on the opening day and throughout the assembly that the prayers of God's covenant people had been answered. The Lord's hand was clearly manifest in all the arrangements. The programme was carried forward step by step punctiliously. The entire organisation functioned like a well-oiled machine. Without a doubt some of the holy angels were present supporting and directing the activities of Jehovah's witnesses and their companions on this marvellous occasion.

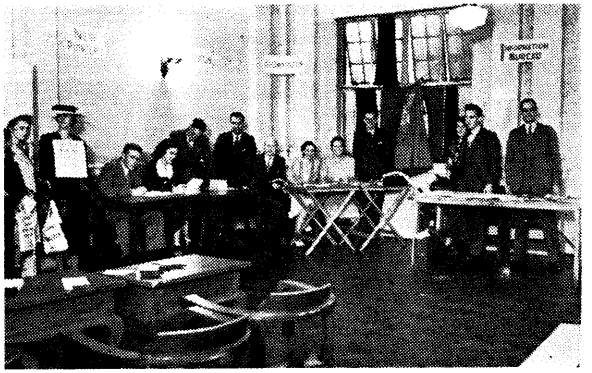
This Theocratic Assembly was described by one of those who came a long way by car with his entire family of five as a "real convention". Thereby he expressed his full satisfaction at the great compensation he received for his trip of close on 2,000 miles there and back. Such were the feelings of every loyal servant of Jehovah and His King, Christ Jesus, present at that convention. Much was expected by everyone who went there and even more was received. The spirit of the convention was one of concentrated enthusiasm to which frequent expression was given by orderly and dignified applause. It was a gathering at which the thrills frequently raised the tone of the assembled multitude to a high pitch of enthusiasm, well balanced by a deep sense of earnest and serious appreciation of the greatness of the cause represented on earth by all who have fixed all their hopes and expectations on the Kingdom soon to reign in complete sway from "sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth".

Convention Premises

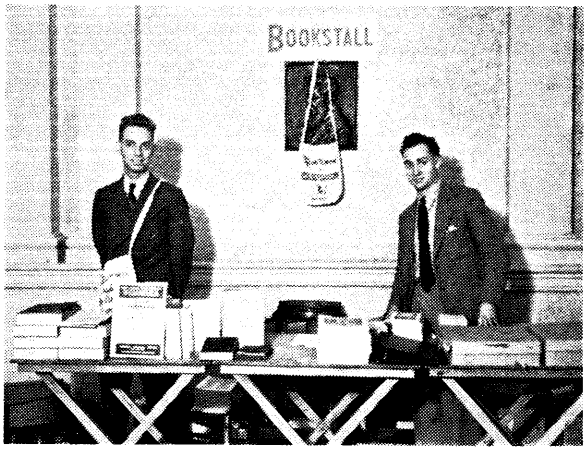
The first problem to be solved by those whose responsibility it was to attend to matters of organisation was a suitable place of assembly. It was realised that in the past year the Lord had blessed His work in this country with a mighty increase making it necessary to obtain appreciably more commodious quarters than have been available in times past. The best that offered was the H.O.D Hall for the European friends and the Mathabe Hall for the Africans. The H.O.D. Hall was just two hundred yards from the main Johannesburg Railway Station and was in all other respects very central. It was a well-constructed, attractive building and was *almost* sufficienty adequate for the purpose.

It is necessary to understand that the H.O.D. Hall is not so much a hall as a large building consisting of a main auditorium, several smaller halls, and numerous rooms. These were all given over to Theocratic use during the Convention weekend.

The main auditorium is on the first floor and access to it is by a short flight of steps. It is a



Service Desks



Convention Book Stall

beautiful, spacious hall, with lofty ceiling and good lighting and ventilation. It had been tastefully decorated for the occasion. The first thing that met the eye on entering was a huge painting which had been erected high above and behind the speakers' platform. It was titled "Let Every Thing that hath Breath Praise Jehovah" and was modelled on the frontispiece of the book *Religion*. The background of the platform, which latter had been specially enlarged for the occasion, was finished in a motif of purple and white. The platform rails were covered with shimmering gold, while along the front of the platform was a brilliant display of pink gladioli, palms and ferns. Each window-sill around the hall had a bowl of pink carnations. The whole effect was pleasing and restful to the eye. The flowers were a gracious gift from a nearby company and several business firms in Johannesburg kindly lent the purple cloth, ferns, etc.

Large banners proclaimed the outstanding features and purpose of the convention. The text for the year 1942 "Blameless in the day of our Lord" stood out in prominent relief at the front of the hall in both English and Afrikaans. Down the entire left side of the auditorium hung one reading "Comfort all that Mourn", while down the right side hung one of corresponding size "Children of the King", the titles of the two public addresses which were to be main features of the assembly. Others were "More Pioneers Wanted", "Model Studies" and "Heil aan onse God en aan die Lam".

The acoustics of the hall were good and to make sure that everyone heard what was said an efficient public address system was installed which carried the speaker's voice to every corner of the main hall and to several of the adjoining halls. With the main hall full at every session and an overflow into the other halls one could not help thinking in a literal sense of the words at Isaiah 49:20 "The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell".

Music

The orchestra and choir were located on the left of the speakers' platform. The fact that the pianist had the assistance of other instrumental music and that the singing was led by trained singers, conducted by an experienced conductor, made the singing hearty and effective. The songs used at the convention were previously selected and printed on specially prepared song sheets in English and Afrikaans. This greatly facilitated the bilingual feature of the convention which was very marked in every respect without making anybody conscious of difference of nationality after the flesh. The most important purpose of the presence of Jehovah's witnesses on earth stood out so well at the convention as in all the doings of God's people these days, viz. the praise of Jehovah, the Most High, that language is seen as merely a means of conveying as effectively as possible the greatest message of all time so that it can reach the minds and hearts of honest persons of whatever kindred, race or tongue. For this reason there never is a begrudging one of the other in meeting the requirements of those to be served by as well as those serving the cause of the Kingdom of Jehovah in linguistic matters or in any other matter for that.

Service Desks

On the ground floor in a smaller hall most of the Convention Service Desks found house room. Here were located the Campaign Literature Tables, "New Pioneers" Desk, Accommodation Desk, Phonograph Repair Department, Book-Stall, Information Bureau and others. This hall was also used to take up some of the overflow from the main auditorium and at times some 100 persons found seating accommodation in it. A loudspeaker connected it to the main hall.

Next door, in another hall, was the Service Registration Desk which was one of the busiest departments of the convention, also the Children's Registration Desk. On this floor was also found the ladies cloak-room where coats, hats and other articles could be left for safe-keeping. A similar arrangement for the men had been made in the large airy basement below. This provision proved very useful and that it was appreciated was manifest by the large number of articles left for safe keeping each day.

Another section of the ground floor was fitted out as a "hospital" or casualty station, and here,

under the capable care of a sister who is a trained nurse, twenty three minor injuries and indispositions were attended to. However, the facilities of this department were never seriously taxed, the whole assembly being remarkably free from accidents.

"Feeding the Multitude"

In past years "feeding the multitude" has been a problem. Between-session periods are short and distances in Johannesburg are great making it impractical for most conventioners to return to their several places of abode for an adequate meal. The greater number of the friends were therefore wont to content themselves with snatching a cup of tea and a sandwich at any near-by cafe, choosing to deny their "inner man" rather than forego the few precious minutes which were available for personal contact with their friends and brethren from various parts of the country. Cases of "that sinking feeling" were consequently fairly numerous after the first or second day. This year the Society decided to follow the example of our brethren overseas and to run its own cafeteria on the premises for the benefit of conventioners.

There were many difficulties. This was a new venture for the South African friends and lack of experience was keenly felt at first. Added to this the accommodation available for the project was very limited. But the scheme was seen to be a necessary one and so Jehovah's people tackled the job with a will. Plans were soon drawn up whereby the difficulties could be overcome and preparations went ahead.

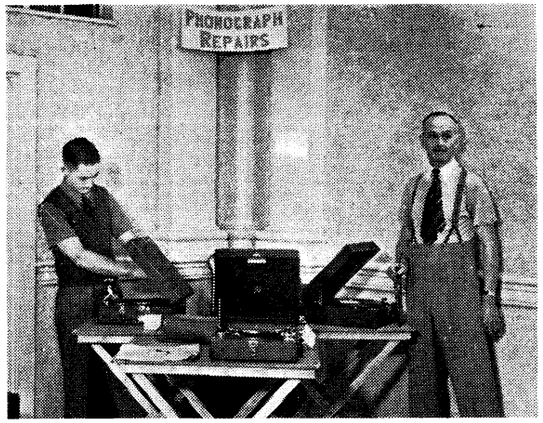
The cafeteria was established on the second floor and took in the gallery of the main auditorium and a large hall which led off this gallery. Together they could seat but 200 people, just one quarter of those present. When it is realized that this seating accommodation had to be used during sessions to take the overflow from the main auditorium it will be appreciated under what difficulties the cafeteria staff laboured. The one who was appointed to care for the arrangements said after it was all over that had he known the magnitude of the task he was to undertake he would never have had the courage to attempt it. But Jehovah's people are not limited by their own capabilities. They do not work in their own strength and everyone who attended the convention was unanimous in the opinion that the cafeteria was a good job well done.

Three sittings of hungry diners were served each mealtime by a band of willing workers. There was very little fuss or confusion. The food was excellent. Plain and without frills, it was fresh, wholesome and satisfying and so attractively served as to tempt the most fickle appetite. Much of it was donated by loving hands and generous hearts and came straight from the country and tasted of the freshness of the country itself. The devoted service of the sisters who gladly gave of their cooking and serving experience to give of their best for the physical requirements of God's assembled people was richly blessed and highly appreciated. They were representative of the country districts, dorps and towns and this gave variety of experience and a thorough going acquaintance with South African tastes. The cafeteria servant originally hailed from Switzerland. Many of the helpers were children and it was a revelation to see the enthusiasm and efficiency of these youngsters. One trim, serious little lady, aged about 12 and with long brown plaits of the kind boys love to pull, attracted particular attention by the deft way in which she served her "customers", handling plates, cups and cutlery as though to the manner born. There were no harassed or sour-faced waiters or waitresses. "Service with a smile" was the keynote. There were neither pay nor tips awaiting them but they were fully rewarded by the joy of service. Only Jehovah can awaken that unselfish devotion in human hearts of which the world is devoid and even unaware of its existence. What a happy day is in store for mankind during the Theocratic Convention that shall never end when nothing shall be done in the name or spirit of commercialism but everything will be done in the spirit of Jehovah and in His Name, as it was done in every branch of service at this assembly of His "willing volunteers".

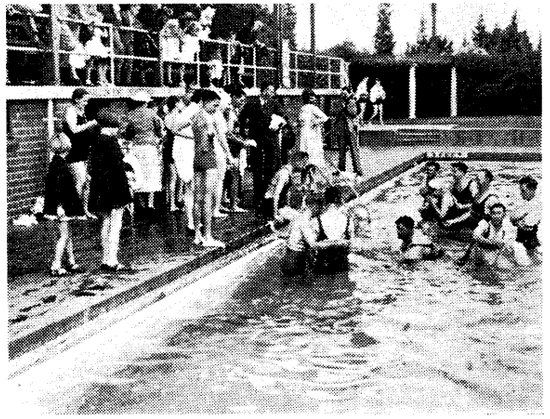
A loudspeaker was installed in the kitchen so that those serving there missed nothing of what was going on.

To complete the work of making good the wear and tear inevitably imposed on the human frame by an assembly such as this a "bar" was established on the first floor where "soft drinks",

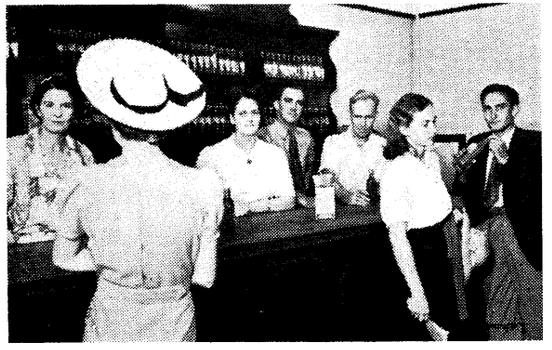
Some of the Kitchen Staff



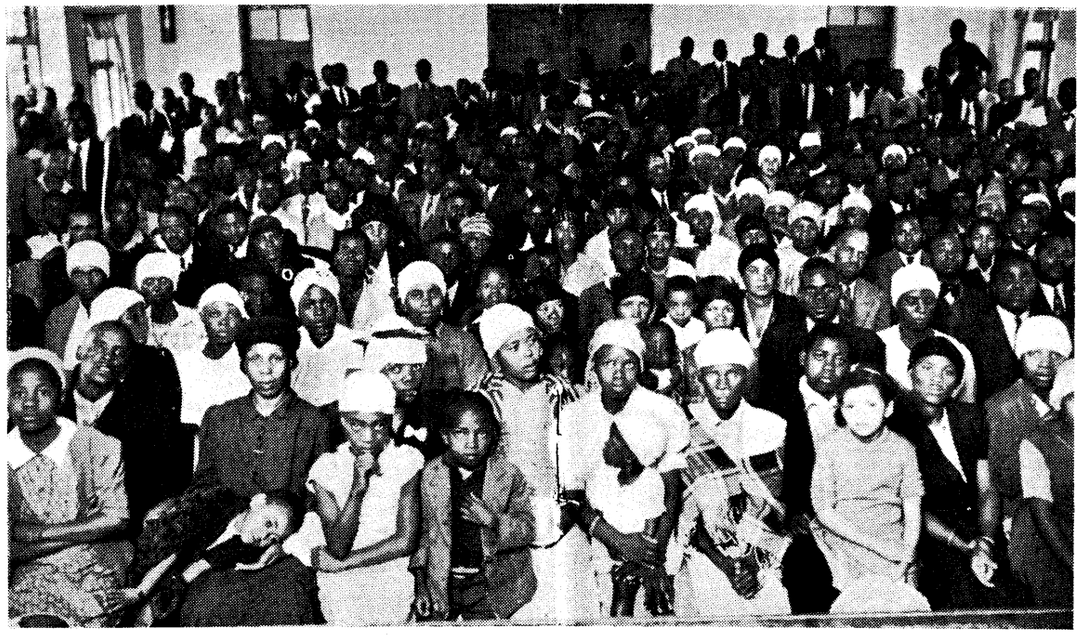
Overhauling Theocratic Equipment



400 *were immersed at Johannesburg*



The "Bar": Soft drinks and ice cream went well!



The African witnesses came from all parts of the country too!

"Children of the King"! a.m. "Children's Day"

On the Doorstep

Issuing Territory

Provision was made for "the inner man"

ice cream and milk could be obtained. It need hardly be said that this department was well patronised. Talking is thirsty work. A summary of the items used in the cafeteria follows:

2 sheep	100 lb. grapes	3 cases lettuce
240 lbs. beef	35 bottles and tins preserved fruits	36 lbs. onions
45 fowls		2 bags peanuts
200 lbs. brawn	250 lbs. butter	68 gallons milk
19 lbs. sausages	350 lbs. jam	300 lbs. sugar
1000 meat pies	6 lbs. meat spread	45 lbs. coffee
300 loaves bread	60 dozen eggs	30 lbs. tea
2 bags cucumbers	1 large cheese	70 lbs. cakes
1 bag cabbages	425 lbs. potatoes	100 lbs. biscuits
2 bags pumpkins	70 lbs green beans	166 doz. cool drinks
2 bags green mealies	12 lbs cooked „	114 doz. ice cream
	100 bushels carrots	13 gals. ice cream
26 pockets oranges	100 bushels beets	14 blocks ice

Approximately 3,000 meals were served to the European friends and a similar number to the Africans at the Mathabe Hall.

Convention Opens

By 9.00 a.m. on Friday morning 800 friends had assembled at the two halls and joined in the opening songs of praise to Jehovah. The programmes for the two sections of the convention ran on parallel lines and were more or less a duplicate of the great convention held some months earlier when 115,000 of Jehovah's witnesses and their companions assembled at St. Louis, U.S.A. After a word of welcome had been extended by the chairman the convention servant pointed out that while this was an assembly of Christians and that every person of goodwill toward Jehovah God, whether he be Catholic, Protestant or Jew, bond or free had been and was cordially invited to attend every session of the assembly it should be noted that it was in no sense of the word a religious gathering hence religious practices such as handshaking should not be indulged in and the strength and energy formerly employed in that way used to better advantage and to the glory of the Lord. The assembled friends were exhorted to work and serve together in unity and at all times to deport themselves as becomes the representatives of The Theocracy. Service arrangements were then explained by another speaker and the friends were instructed in their application. Then like a well-ordered army they began leaving for the field. Most of them were speedily transported by car or caravan to residential sections of the city. The rest went by bus or tram to their assignments or walked to nearby territory. They began returning some hours later and cheery smiles and busy tongues indicated many happy experiences in the morning's work. The main feature of field service on this day and throughout the convention was the "New Work" with the Model Study Booklet and the phonograph. A considerable amount of literature was also placed.

The afternoon session opened at 2.30 p.m. and the first half-hour was scheduled to be given over to songs, a feature which is always enjoyed by Theocratic conventioners. During this period, however, the friends were treated to the first real thrill of the assembly. The chairman announced from the platform that he had a surprise for them. He was pleased to be able to tell them that in spite of war-time restrictions and other handicaps the Year Text and Calendar for 1942 was now available for every person present with some over for those of our brethren who had not been able to attend. There was loud applause at this and at the close of the session the bookstall was besieged by eager conventioners anxious to obtain their copies.

Pioneer Meeting

From 3.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. two discourses were delivered, one in English, the other in Afrikaans. The theme of both was the "Victory Song" (Judges 5).

At 4.00 p.m. the Branch servant for South Africa again addressed the assembly. He spoke on "Pioneer's Place in the Organisation". Due to Jehovah's loving provision through his visible organisation all the full time workers in South Africa were enabled to come and share in the glorious Kingdom service at Johannesburg. All registered as such on arrival, and the Society provided free meals for them and also rooming accommodation. This supports that the Society is in very truth a "charitable" organisation even according to the definition of the worldly law. The speaker's remarks were primarily addressed to the pioneers for whom the seats in the front section of the hall had been reserved, but the subject matter was of intense interest to all present. He stressed the privilege of devoting all one's time

to the service of The Theocracy and of following the example of the faithful men who from the time of Abel had been witnesses of Jehovah. Pioneer requirements were dealt with and the Scriptures at Isa. 62:10 and Luke 12:22-36 covered in detail. The attendance now reached the 1,000 mark. Next two young pioneers gave a demonstration showing the essentials of an effective Model Study. This was given in Afrikaans, was well conducted, and of real educational value to all present.

The evening session opened at seven and began with a further half-hour of songs and declarations. The rest of the evening was given over to two discourses. The first, in Afrikaans, dealt with the closing verses of the Victory Song sung by Barak and Deborah. The second, in English, dealt with the absorbing and timely subject "Noah's Day". After calling attention to the parallel existing between Noah's day and our own day the speaker exhorted the audience to keep the barriers up against the intrusion of the demons and not to waste time in "social parties" and the like.

Thus ended the first happy day. The friends retired to their temporary homes for a well earned rest and looked for greater things on the morrow.

Saturday, April 4th

This was the day set aside for the great public address, "Comfort All That Mourn". One could sense an air of expectancy amongst the convention crowd. For more than a week previously local friends, pioneers and others had been engaged in distributing handbills advertising both this lecture and the one to be given on the Sunday "Children of The King".

Seizure of Leaflets

This morning one last spurt was to be made, in addition to the usual house-to-house work, to distribute all the bills that remained. By 1.00 o'clock this had been accomplished. The convention programmes and half the leaflets advertising the public meetings had been seized by the censorship. These were quickly replaced by the Theocratic organisation and when after representations had been made to the Chief Censor the seized leaflets were released a day or so before the convention began we were able to give a more extensive witness than originally planned. The release of these leaflets and programmes was a further evidence of Jehovah's special care over His people at this convention and that He was pleased with their faith and faithfulness in pressing on with it under all circumstances in spite of the apparent odds against them. The release of the leaflets should have a beneficial effect on the minds of honest rulers who up to now have had, in some instances, a totally wrong conception of the purpose and effect of the work of Jehovah's witnesses on the minds of the people. The false claim, fostered by "Catholic Action", that it is hampering or tends to hamper the war effort is a total misconception. If they would only listen patiently to the facts, as the rulers of Britain have done, they would learn that Jehovah's witnesses detest totalitarianism as the special mark of the Axis-Powers and as a blight on human interests specifically directed against those now lifting the banner of The Theocracy. They would then act differently from what they do at present. In all 100,000 leaflets were distributed throughout Johannesburg and its environs. In addition hundreds of attractive posters bearing the same announcement met the eye at every vantage point, car banners proclaimed it and window cards with the same message looked at one from a thousand shop-fronts.

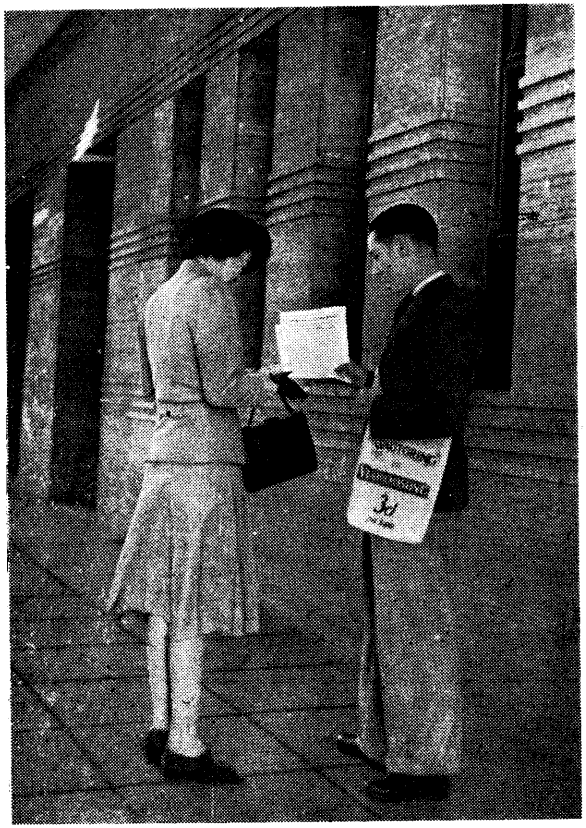
The time drew near. The afternoon session was opened as usual with songs and declarations. Then followed half an hour given over to a consideration of magazine witnessing. There were four speakers and all aspects of this important phase of the witness work were dealt with in both English and Afrikaans.

Then for the benefit of those who were to symbolise their consecration by water immersion the next day two talks were given on "Baptism", again in English and Afrikaans. The meaning of this necessary symbolic act was fully explained.

Public Meeting

It was now 3.00 o'clock and time to prepare for the public meeting. There were 1,200 present and the people were still streaming in. At 3.30 the meeting began. The audience gave close attention to the lecture on Daniel chapter 11 and were greatly comforted to note that the final end of the "Axis" powers and all evil ones was so clearly foretold in the Scriptures.

Doubtless there were many present at this meeting and also at the public meeting the following day who missed keenly the familiar, strong, but kindly voice of Judge Rutherford. For some years now we have listened at these public meetings to his latest speeches in recorded form. Due to present restrictions on importation the records were not available. The next best thing was done, however, and the speakers, who delivered the lectures on "Comfort All That Mourn" and "Children of the King" adhered to the original text. The audiences assembled at both halls evinced the keenest interest in these lectures. At the close of the public meeting on



Pavement Witnessing—"I'll take one!"

Saturday afternoon, with a mighty shout of "Aye", it was unanimously agreed to send the following message to all persons of goodwill in South Africa:

TO ALL PERSONS IN SOUTH AFRICA
OF GOODWILL TOWARD
JEHOVAH AND HIS KING, CHRIST JESUS:

"Having received great comfort from Jehovah's Word, and now enjoying the privilege of being His servants, we send you this message of comfort that you too may, in this hour of world distress, receive consolation and lay hold upon that which will bring endless life and joy.

"The unfailing promise of JEHOVAH, repeatedly stated in the Bible, is that soon He shall destroy all wickedness and wicked rule in the earth, to be followed by the rule of righteousness by Christ Jesus and His visible representatives on the earth, and which government shall afford boundless blessings to the people. The transition period is now here, evidenced by the world trouble, and which soon shall end with Armageddon, 'the battle of that great day of God Almighty.' The only place of safety is under THE THEOCRACY, that righteous rule of JEHOVAH by Christ Jesus. All who oppose that government shall perish for ever. All who are of goodwill toward JEHOVAH and HIS THEOCRATIC GOVERNMENT by Christ Jesus, and who flee thereto, may find safety and life.

"The rulers of wickedness now stand where they ought not to stand, wrongfully claiming the right to rule the world contrary to Jehovah and His King. That totalitarian dictatorial rule the Lord declares to be the 'desolating abomination' foretold by Daniel the prophet. (Mark 13:14) The Lord warns all persons of goodwill to immediately flee to JEHOVAH'S Government by Christ Jesus, which is THE THEOCRACY, and which is the only place of safety. Be wise, therefore, and obey the Lord's warning and commandments and immediately take your stand on the side of THE THEOCRACY, that you may have and enjoy the everlasting blessings from the Lord."

Magazine Rally

The public meeting concluded at 4.30 p.m. and immediately thereafter the witnesses swung into action with Afrikaans magazines and English booklets. After the instruction and encouragement received earlier in the afternoon it seemed that everyone wanted to join the enthusiastic band of magazine publishers. Within a few minutes every corner of the down town section of Johannesburg had its magazine publisher with magazines in hand and bag proudly slung across the shoulder. They were well received and an excellent witness was given. For many it was their first experience in the street work and they were surprised to find how easy and interesting it can be. A good time was had by all. The story is told of a young lady who has only recently come to a knowledge of the truth going with a party of experienced magazine publishers and asking rather dubiously what she should "say" to the people. She soon discovered that it really wasn't necessary to say very much at all and ended up by being "top-scorer" for the party.

Witness for Jehovah in Action

By seven o'clock the main hall was again filled to capacity by happy people, loking forward with eagerness and much speculation to the item for the evening which was announced on the programme by the intriguing title "Witness for Jehovah in Action".

First however there was to be the usual half hour of songs, and during this interlude the assembly was treated to an item not scheduled on the programme. The chairman called upon the Society's depot servant at Zomba, Nyasaland,

to address the convention. In a short ten-minute talk he gave a vivid report of the progress of the witness work in that land which was enjoyed by all present.

Then came the item for which everyone had been waiting. The mystery was soon unfolded. "Witness for Jehovah in Action" was the title given to what may be rightly called the greatest drama ever written. It was the service record of men who down through the centuries have stood, worked and suffered for the name of Jehovah the Almighty God, from the days of righteous Abel until now. It was presented in two parts—"Ancient" and "Modern". The tale of olden time ended with the days of the Reformation and included a presentation of the service records of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jeremiah, Jesus of Nazareth and of Paul, and of such men as Tyndale, Huss and Wycliffe. The modern scenes detailed the activities of Jehovah's witnesses in these last days. The depth, power, and thrilling interest of the script was such that it kept the audience spell bound throughout.

Beautiful music played an important part in the unfolding of the mighty record. It served both as a back-ground and as a means of emphasis and added greatly to the pleasure of the audience. The scenes depicting the present day activities of Jehovah's witnesses included the house-to-house work, doorstep phonograph set-up, pavement witnessing, model study and Theocratic Youth Publishers. As the "exploits" of the witnesses in South Africa during the previous year in each part of the work were unfolded great enthusiasm was manifested. It had truly been a banner year of Theocratic service in the Union, and indeed throughout the earth.

Many were the expressions of appreciation heard at the conclusion. Jehovah's people are not given to superlatives but "marvelous" and "most impressive" seemed to be words on every lip.

Sunday, April 5th

This was *Children's Day,* and building their hopes on what had gone before everyone was looking for more thrills. They got them! Owing to the full programme inside there was no field service this day. The morning session opened with a talk in Afrikaans on Psa. 89:34. This was followed by an English discourse on "Integrity" in which amongst other things it was emphasized that UNIVERSAL DOMINATION was the great issue now before all creatures; that Jehovah's people must continue to stand shoulder to shoulder if they are to win out in the fight. There must be unity of action NOW and a spirit of goodwill toward our fellow servants.

At 10.00 a.m. the main hall was cleared. Children between 5 and 18 to the number of 340 had been registered for the great occasion of "Children's Day". Prior to the Johannesburg gathering letters went from Jehovah's organisation calling the people, old and young and children, and as in days of old, 'even to the registering of all the little ones . . . their sons and daughters.'—2 Chronicles 31:14-18. There was an atmosphere of great expectancy regarding this event. It was a sight which touched all present and especially those of the parents whose children were directly involved when the youngsters were gathered in the front part of the hall between 10 and 11 a.m. Promptly at 11 a.m. the discourse on "Children of the King" began. It was a fine study of the child mind to watch the variety of young ones during this part of the convention. The older children gave close attention to the discourse which consisted largely of advice to parents in regard to their responsibility towards their offspring in relation to the Theocracy and of instruction to the children to obey their parents in the Lord. The scene of Moses giving instruction to the Israelites when assembled on the plains of Moab just before entering the promised land was vividly called to mind. The stress laid by this servant of God at Deut. 6:6, 7 on the instruction due to the rising generation which would soon have to take the place of their elders in continuing to serve the purposes of Jehovah was again emphasised on this occasion. The instruction was not intended merely for the children present but to all "Children of the King" who will soon be called upon to continue the service of Jehovah's Theocracy on earth after the last members of the remnant will have joined their Bridegroom, the King of the Theocracy, in the spiritual realm. Included among the "children of the King" will be Daniel and the other faithful men and women of old mentioned and referred to at Hebrews 11.

This event was the real high point of the instruction part of the convention. It was very expressive of the outstanding characteristic of the convention, viz., one of training, instruction and getting experience for something vastly bigger very soon. The possibilities of a great movement among all classes of people soon towards the safety to be gained under the Theocracy alone was definitely stirring to the enlightened minds of those attending in true Theocratic spirit.

The younger children of five years and up could naturally not grasp in full the meaning of what was taking place there. In fact even the adults will appreciate in days to come in fuller measure the meaning of all they saw and heard and experienced. But the occasion has

The eldest candidate for Immersion. Happy to be on the Lord's side

undoubtedly left an indelible mark in the impressible minds of even the youngest children in that gathering. That became evident when towards the conclusion of the discourse the children were more specifically addressed and some of the remarks and questions were repeated in Afrikaans so that all present could have the fullest understanding possible of what was transpiring. They were exhorted to follow the advice of the prophets when they returned and to walk with them in the way of righteousness.

After concluding his talk the speaker said to the children: "All of you who have agreed to do the will of God and have taken your stand on the side of The Theocracy, and have agreed to obey God and His King, STAND UP!" It was a heart-thrilling, joyful sight to see all the children rise up as one man before Jehovah; and what applause filled the hall! Again he said: "All of you that will do what you agreed to do, say Aye!" Then came a thunder of "Aye" from the children on their feet (and more applause). Again he asked: "If you had an instrument in your hand which you could use to the honour of Jehovah's Name, would you be diligent to use it?" "Yes!" came like the sound of many waters. (And more applause from the entire audience) Then he said to the children, "Be seated, and I will tell you about that instrument," and immediately held up one of the most beautiful books ever printed, and he then shouted with joy: "The name of the book is 'CHILDREN'." (And what tremendous applause ensued!) Then he said that as a gracious gift from the Lord each of the children would receive, free, one of these books! (And imagine, if you can, the joy and clapping of those children who are marching into the Kingdom!)

Then we witnessed a most beautiful sight,—the platform was so constructed that it had two stairways in front of it, one coming up on each side—palms adorn the platform. The ushers were instructed to direct the children up the steps from one side, have them get their books, and pass on down the steps at the other end of the platform; and while the grown-ups were happily looking on, these consecrated children who shall soon be the real workers under the direction of the "princes", Daniel and others, and will fulfill the divine mandate to multiply and fill the earth, were going up the steps amidst the "palms" (Revelation 7:9) while the orchestra played some songs of joy, and provided a picture of the entrance of the "great multitude" into the everlasting Kingdom of Jehovah God. The songs which were sung with great enthusiasm included such favourites as "Children of the Heavenly King", "The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon", "Who is on the Lord's side?" and "Give Praise to Jehovah".

The peak attendance of the convention was registered at this session when 1,667 were present.

Immersion

It was most befitting that the next item on the programme was the immersion service at the Pioneer Park Baths where 156 were immersed. The candidates for immersion and those required to assist them were immediately organised to depart in order. Thirty or more motor vehicles were required for their conveyance including lorries. The number immersed at the African assembly was 244 making a total of 400 in all, which speaks most eloquently of the accelerated pace at which the "Great Multitude", the "other sheep", are now fleeing into the Theocratic mountains.

Quite a number of those immersed were from the children who had just stood up to manifest their stand for the Theocracy and their readiness to faithfully serve the great Theocrat at all times. Parents present who for some reason or other could not bring their children with them or not all of them felt grieved at heart that their young ones should have missed this great occasion.

Children's Declarations

Immediately following the immersion service there was a declaration meeting for children. It did one's heart good to hear these youngsters, several of whom are in the full time service, declare their allegiance to the "Higher Powers" —Jehovah and His King, Christ Jesus—and relate some of their recent experiences in Kingdom service. One youngster of 16 years said: "I

started in the pioneer work recently. The first obstacle I had to surmount was exemption from school as I was not 16 yet. Fortunately I got exemption and am now engaged in fulltime service and already taste the joy of service. Of course, I expect persecution will come, but remember that the servant is not greater than his Master and I am determined to endure unto the end."

Another, just turned 14: "While engaged in the work from house-to-house, I met an old lady. I told her what I was doing, but she burst out saying, 'Get you gone, you little fellow! What can you teach me about the Bible;' In all civility I then told her that you will hear the truth from the mouth of sucklings."

Another, a laddie of 10, said: "My mother and I were out in the work one day. I came to a man and offered him my testimony card. Thereupon he said, 'No thanks, little man; you can teach me nothing.' I replied, 'No, sir, nor do I desire to teach you but only wish to tell you about the Lord's Kingdom'."

The "New Work"

The convention servant then outlined the "new work" in harmony with instructions just received from the Society's new president. All present realised that these instructions were practical and timely. The Scriptures at Gal. 6: 4, 5; Acts 11:26 and Jeremiah 16:15-17 formed the basis of his remarks. Another speaker then covered the same subject matter in Afrikaans. This was followed by a talk on "Solving the Problem" in which it was clearly demonstrated that the new work with the help of the new instrument just provided by the Lord would kindle the interest of thousands who already had the literature but who had not read or studied it. It was seen too that the new work with its model study arrangement would assist all publishers in the making of their respective quotas. The points in this talk were presented also in both English and Afrikaans.

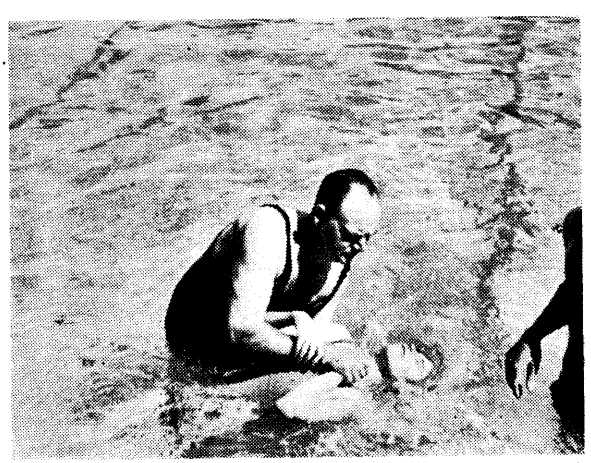
The instruction of the convention ranged over a wide field. Service instruction and demonstrations as to how the "new work" should be done were prominent in the programme and on the platform. On the Sunday evening four servants of the "Jonadabsburg Company" conducted a model Theocratic service meeting. Various points essential to efficiency in Kingdom service were dealt with in breezy, effective style and the audience alternated between laughing happily and listening intently to words of instruction which will surely prove invaluable in the days and months ahead.

Just before this meeting began the convention servant referred to the courageous stand of our brethren in the Rhodesias many of whom had been imprisoned for preaching the gospel of God's Kingdom and it was unanimously agreed to send a message of love and greetings from the convention to them.

Another happy day ended with a talk on "The End".

"Food Convenient"

The lectures given at the convention were all based on food convenient for the household of faith as supplied to the Lord's sheep of both folds through the recognised channels. The prophecy of Daniel as recorded in the eleventh chapter constituted a large portion of this instruction. In this respect the setting or placing of the "Abomination of Desolation" where it ought not to stand as foretold in Daniel 11:31 and Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14 as a sign for the great multitude to hurriedly flee into the Kingdom was very pronounced. The setting up is now in progress and everything points to the fact that soon it will be completely set up and issuing its "peace and safety" cry. The corresponding swift increase in the numbers now entering the "great multitude" class was fully in evidence at this convention as well as in other parts of the earth. The great rush soon to be expected as this fulfillment of prophecy becomes more manifest greatly thrills all lovers of righteousness now. Glimmerings of such visions were evident at this convention. Clearer understanding and fulfillment is the happy and confident expectation of all servants of the Theocracy. The prospect of many of those present and others soon witnessing the presence of Daniel and the other faithful men of old back from the grave, to join them in Kingdom service and possibly at the great general assembly spoken of by Paul in Hebrews



Symbolizing her Consecration

12:23 greatly brightened the hopes of God's people there assembled in contrast to the increasing gloom and gross darkness that is now sinking upon all outside of the Theocratic arrangements.

Monday, April 6th

Although this day would see the conclusion of the assembly and the time was but a few hours distant when friends and brethren would once more go their several ways there were no sad faces or heavy hearts among them. Jehovah's people rejoice in the fellowship of their brethren but they do not fear isolation. Wherever they may be they are in spirit united one to the other and they rest confidently in the promise of the Lord that He will guide and direct their steps and help and sustain them as they have need. They assembled for field service on this last morning as eagerly and as joyously as they had on the first day, eager to wind up the great convention with a mighty shout in behalf of the people of goodwill and to the praise and honour of Jehovah and His King. The field service report for the weekend will be of interest to all.

Field Service Report

During the convention weekend 1,066 publishers engaged in the field service spending 5,237 hours in the witness work. In all 687 volumes, 8,190 booklets and 2,919 magazines were placed. Backcalls numbered 632 and model studies held 154. New subscriptions totalled 6 and sound attendance 3,170. Surely a mighty witness to the incoming Theocratic Government.

Concluding Session

The Monday afternoon session opened with a period of joyful songs and declarations. The convention servant gave his concluding talk on "Advice to Kingdom Publishers" emphasising the importance of all publishers being thoroughly familiar with the contents of the publication of that name. He also gave counsel in line with that in the article "The Final Gathering" (Jeremiah, chapter 16) and which was a word in season for all. The two concluding talks in Afrikaans and English dealt with various parts of Daniel, chapter 11, to which reference has already been made.

Jehovah's people had prayed much for this convention. They wondered at times whether it would be possible at all. It was a great success, surpassing all expectations. It was a miracle from the Lord. It was one of the modern day "exploits" by "the people that know their God". (Daniel 11:32) The "strange work" is increasing in vigour and determination. It will not peter out on account of slackness on the part of Jehovah's servants. It will increase in power and be stopped (apparently) only by a mighty effort on the part of Jehovah's enemies and that will be the occasion for Jehovah to rise up to the prey and forever rid the earth and the entire universe of all the wicked ones in the greatest fight yet seen and experienced and never again to be experienced anywhere, and so establish lasting peace and happiness on earth. That was the effect and lasting impression left on the minds of those attending this convention. This vision we know to be true.

And so the conventioners dispersed. The Lord had gathered them together according to His will and had instructed them according to His purpose. They went back, each man to his place, solemnly determined to serve Jehovah, the Most High God, as long as they have breath to speak and fingers with which to fight, seeking to sound the trumpet louder and yet more loudly, avidly 'fish', 'hunt' and 'search' as He has commanded.

They do not know what the coming months may hold. Of one thing they are certain. Jehovah's army is moving invincibly to victory. This old world is passing and will pass. The Kingdom of righteousness is here and the time is at hand when everything that lives shall praise its Author and its King.

"Both young men and maidens; old men and children: Let them praise the Name of the Lord: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven."

Letter from Two Grateful Pioneers

"For the past twenty odd years we have been regularly attending conventions, most of which have been in Europe, but never before have we experienced such unspeakable joy, such encouragement and so clear a vision as at this Theocratic Convention in Johannesburg.

"Paul quoting from Isa. 64:4 wrote: 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' Surely these words have a very apt application now and had a very literal fulfillment at this thrilling convention. Words cannot express our deep gratitude for this feast of fat things which we have all so much enjoyed. Your labour of love and forethought for the encouragement of your brethren has certainly not been in vain, for we are happily returning to our assigned positions on the Theocratic battlefront, invigorated, refreshed, fully contented to each bear our own burden and determined indeed to fight and march right through with you to victory.

"The songs of praise to Jehovah still ring in our ears and will do forever.

"Shou'd you have the opportunity please tell the catering committee that their willing and untiring service was a colossal contribution to the complete success of this great convention.

"Again profound thanks be unto our God, blessed be His Holy Name.

Your fellow Theocratic witnesses,

(*Signed*) Frank and Christine Taylor."